

# Overview of K-12 Education Accountability: State Policies

Robert Butts  
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

State Board of Education meeting  
May 11, 2006



## The Big Picture: School and District Accountability



- Types of Accountability
  - Political
  - Financial
  - Staff qualifications
  - Student access and “opportunity to learn”
  - Student achievement results

## Political Accountability



- School Board elections
  - Candidates win and remain in office for a variety of reasons
- Levy and Bond elections
  - Approx. 20% of your budget is at risk every 2-4 years
  - Will not be able to build/renovate schools without trust
- Meeting the needs of parents
- Local Newspaper stories and editorials

## Financial Accountability



- Districts are complex, often large, business enterprises
  - Largest business in many communities
  - Funding is dependent on many variables
- Rely on levies -- which in some communities are not a certain
- Have active unions that want to meet the financial and working condition needs of their members
- Compliance with fiscal requirements:
  - State Auditor
  - Federal Review Teams
  - Legislative Accountability and Evaluation Program
  - Legislatively mandated studies

## Staffing Accountability



- Teachers, librarians, counselors, principals, and other professional staff must meet certification requirements
  - Includes teaching assignments
- Fingerprint background checks
- Code of Conduct enforcement
- NCLB: “Highly qualified” teacher requirements
- Parent expectations

### Pre-Education Reform

## Access and Opportunity to Learn



- WA Constitution
  - Access for all children
- Basic Education Act of 1977
  - Accountability for adults (e.g., discipline)
  - Instructional offerings
    - Content areas, # of school days, total instructional hours
  - 25 hours of teacher contact/week
  - Class size (K-4 smaller than 5-12)
  - Created new funding system
    - Basic allocation based on FTEs
    - Categorical programs
    - Increased funding equity (e.g., levy lids)
- Compulsory coursework
  - Must offer certain courses (e.g., US History)
  - Must have courses that are needed for college
  - Credit-based graduation requirements

## Pre-Education Reform

# Norm-referenced Tests



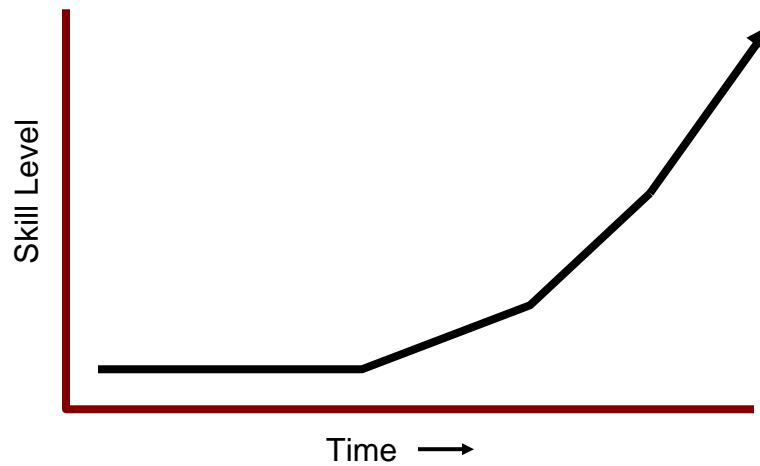
- The beginning of statewide accountability for results
- Legislature required districts administer national norm-referenced tests in the 1980s
  - Initially grade 4, expanded to middle and high school
- Widely reported in newspapers
- Results based on a curve and designed to sort
- No “standards”
- Not reported by ethnic/racial/income
- Were repealed in 2005

## House Bill 1209 (1993)



- Commission on Student Learning
  - Essential Academic Learning Requirements
  - WASL
  - Ad Hoc Accountability Task Force
    - Reading Goals/Establish an Accountability Commission
- Reporting requirements
  - OSPI
  - School Annual School Performance Report
- Certificate of Mastery required for graduation
  - Once the State Board finds the WASL “valid and reliable”

## The Increasing Need for Skills and Knowledge

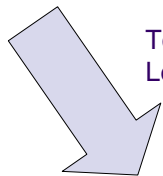


## Student Accountability

The Major Conceptual Change



Access and  
Opportunity to Learn

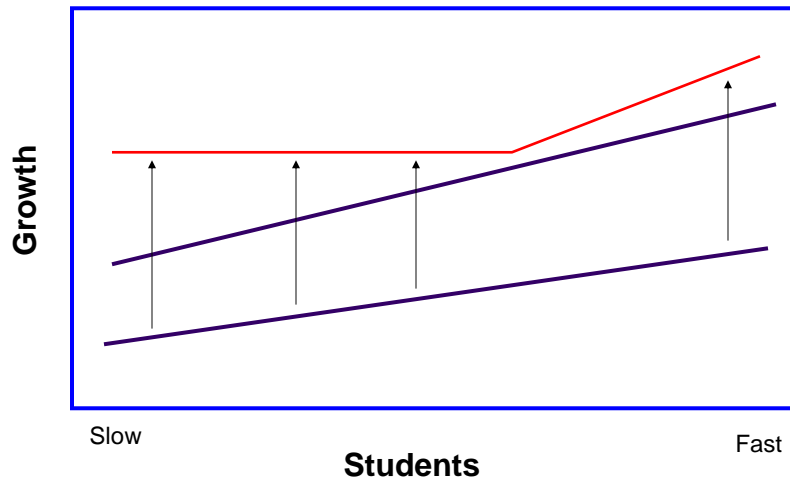


To Access and Opportunity to  
Learn AND

Student Achievement Results

## How do we now define Success?

From a "Year's growth" to "meeting or exceeding standards"

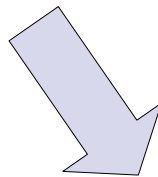


## High School Graduation Requirements

From Credits

(with passing grades)

to



Credits and Skills

## Other Current Accountability Measures

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Reading Fluency



- Legislators, others wanted an earlier indicator of reading achievement
- Administered by teacher one-on-one
  - Student reads a passage
  - Teacher checks for errors and speed
  - Optional comprehension check also available
- If a student does not pass, assistance to be provided and student retested in the spring
- Results NOT reported to the state
- Still required and being administered

## Other Current Accountability Measures

### Reading and Mathematics Goals



- Started with 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading.
  - Expanded to mathematics and additional grades
- Based on a “continuous improvement model”
- Individual school and district goals
  - 25% reduction in the number of students NOT meeting standards
- Was a consideration in early efforts to identify schools for the “School Improvement” program
- Also distributed banners and plaques
- Was overshadowed by NCLB

## Other Current Accountability Measures

### House Bill 2195 – CAA/CIA



- In 2005, Legislature modified the graduation requirements
  - Created the Certificate of Academic Achievement and Certificate of Individual Achievement
  - Established implementation dates
    - Class of 2008: Reading, writing, math
    - Class of 2010: Science added
  - Directed OSPI to develop Alternative method recommendations
  - Mandated retake opportunities
- In many ways, this is the MOST important accountability measure

## Models Discussed by the A+ Commission



- Value-added
  - Tracks progress of individual students and measures annual gain
  - Can be aggregated by classroom, school, district
  - Must have annual, linked assessments, preferably in multiple content areas
  - Emphasis is on one-year growth: Not moving students to standards



## Models Discussed by the A+ Commission (continued)



- Schools that “beat the odds”
  - Strong correlation between achievement and poverty
  - However, there are schools with students who out-perform students in schools with similar student demographics
  - The reverse also occurs
  - Should this analysis be part of the accountability system, and if so, in what way?

## Models Discussed by the A+ Commission (continued)



- Providing Rewards and Incentives
  - Difficult to reach agreement
    - School or individual-based?
    - Based on what criteria?
    - Growth or “point in time” performance?
    - What unintended behaviors will result?
    - Would we be taking \$s away from more “needy” schools?

## What's changed in the past several years?



- Annual reading and mathematics assessments
  - Grades 3-8, 10
- Additional years of WASL data
  - Can average out beginning and ending years
- Data that links WASL scores with individual students who are poor
  - How well do low-income students do school-by-school?
- Spring of 2008 will soon be here